

REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 8-11 and 14-15 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Examiner rejected claims 12-15 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner rejected claims 1, 6-7, and 12-13 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Scepanovic, et al. (Scepanovic). The Examiner also rejected claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Rostoker, et al. (Rostoker).

Applicants have amended claims 8 and 14, and have canceled claims 1-7 and 12-13. No claims have been added. Accordingly, claims 8-11, and 14-19 remain pending in the application after entry of this Amendment.

I. Objection to Claims 8-11 and 14-15

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to claims 8-11 and 14-15 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Examiner stated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants have rewritten claims 8 and 14 in independent form. Claims 9-11 are dependent on claim 8. Claim 15 is dependent on claim 14. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 8-11 and 14-15 are allowable, as amended. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claims 8-11 and 14-15.

II. Rejection of Claims 14-15 Under §112, Second Paragraph

The Examiner rejected claims 14-15 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which

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applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Examiner stated that each Steiner point having a circular shape is confusing, since a point is dimensionless and cannot have a shape.

Applicants respectfully submit that the term "Steiner point" has a commonly understood meaning for design layouts, and this commonly understood meaning is expressly stated in Claim 14. Specifically, as recited in Claim 14, Steiner point refers to a location in a layout where two segments of a route (two interconnect lines) intersect. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the allowed claims 16-19 may provide additional insight into use of the term "Steiner point."

Notwithstanding, Applicants have amended claim 14 to recite a plurality of Steiner nodes, instead of Steiner points. *See, e.g.*, lines 3-4 of amended claim 14; *see also* page 10, line 14 and page 100, line 21 of the specification in the present application. Alternatively, Applicants are amenable to amending claim 14 to recite Steiner-point intersections, or regions, or locations in the design layout.

III. Rejection of Claims 1-7 and 12-13 under §102(b)

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 6-7, and 12-13 under §102(b) as being anticipated by Scepanovic. The Examiner also rejected claims 1-7 under §102(b) as being anticipated by Rostoker. Applicants have canceled claims 1-7 and 12-13. Thus, these claims are withdrawn from consideration.

IV. Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner allowed claims 16-19. Applicants thank the Examiner for the allowance. Applicants have further amended the remaining claims into independent form to put these claims in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request consideration and allowance of all allowable pending claims.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that all pending claims, namely claims 8-11 and 14-19, are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejections and objections is requested. Allowance is earnestly solicited at the earliest possible date.

Respectfully submitted,

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